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A STUDY OF THE ROUTE OF CABEZA DE VACA.

I.

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1. *Introduction.*

It may seem superfluous to attempt a new discussion of the route of Cabeza de Vaca from Texas to Sonora; but to the writer there seems to be so much omitted from previous examinations which bears directly on the location of the route, that he has ventured to submit yet another study of the journey.

It will be presumed that the reader is familiar with at least the narrative of Cabeza's wanderings as told by himself in what is usually called his *Naufragios*; but it will be probably better to outline briefly here the more evident stages of the journey, for immediate reference.

Besides the account written by Cabeza alone, after he had returned to Spain, he and his three companions (being, with the negro Steven, all that were left of the army of De Narvaez, which was stranded on the west coast of the Gulf of Mexico) wrote, while in the city of Mexico, a joint letter to the Royal Audiencia at Santo Domingo; and this letter has been incorporated by Oviedo in his *Historia de las Indias*, with a little additional comment. As Cabeza and Castillo went home in 1537,¹ they left this account at Santo Domingo; and that of Cabeza alone was not published till 1542. Besides these there is a relation of Cabeza's which Mr. Bandelier thinks is a mere condensation of the *Naufragios*, and of small import. This I have not examined.

I can not agree with Bandelier in his low estimate of the accuracy of the joint letter in comparison with Cabeza's narrative; and I agree with Oviedo in believing that the testimony of three, fresh from the scenes, is better than that of one, recorded some years later, when, by his own confession, his memory fails him at certain points. The *Naufragios* is longer, and much more detailed generally, especially on incidents of topography and customs of the

natives; but the letter brings out certain matters that are obscure in the *Naufragios*, and supplies many omissions. The joint study reveals the route in a fuller light, and it must be a matter of regret that when Mr. Bandelier presented the new translation of the one in the "Trailmakers Series" he did not incorporate a translation of the other also. Since Oviedo knew Cabeza personally, and could inquire into the matter for himself, we must respect his opinion—an opinion which I think an examination of the two accounts will sustain. There are some striking discrepancies that are interesting. That account which is the more detailed at certain points, however, should command our credence the more—all things else being equal. In this paper all citations from Cabeza's single account are to be referred to the Bandelier translation, because it is more accessible than that of Buckingham Smith, and in some respects better; and the reference will, for brevity, be made under the word "Cabeza." The reference to the joint letter will be made under the word "Oviedo"—the original Spanish being found in that author's *Historia General y Natural de las Indias* in Tomo III, at pages 582 to 618, of the usual edition found in our libraries.

With the exception of a certain Ortiz whom De Soto found on the coast of Florida, Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, and Estevanico, a Moor and servant of Dorantes, were all that finally survived from the army of Pámfilo de Narvaez, which entered Florida in 1527. Five barges of this expedition were wrecked on the Gulf coast of Texas in November of that year. Two of these, containing the Cabeza party were stranded on an island from which they began their remarkable journey by land; and the other barges were lost further westward—that of the governor having landed its men before being swept out to sea. From this island where Cabeza was, two different parties went on westward, by land only, before Cabeza made the attempt six years later, which time he spent in slavery and in wandering inland and along the coast in trading and exploring ventures. When he starts, he meets with the other three survivors mentioned, and after a year and a half of delay they all escape from their Indian masters, go a short way and spend the winter, and then pass far inland northward, and spend almost the whole of another winter before they reach, west of this, a great river, with perma-

nent houses. Here they hear of the coast of the western ocean, toward which they go in search of food, and which they finally approach in upper Sonora. The province of this paper is confined to a study of the part of the journey thus indicated, and the various stages of it will appear in the discussion.

As the five barges built on the Florida coast, after the disastrous inland expedition and the loss of the ships, were meandering west, they passed a great river, which, without cavil, was the Mississippi; and here they were blown out to sea so that for about eight days they were unable to approach land. Their course in the mean time was westward, however, and finally the two barges containing Cabeza and his companions struck on an island, which Cabeza named *Mal-Hado*, i. e., Ill-Fate or Bad-Luck, only two leagues from the coast at most. He says that this island was five leagues long and a league wide, with a rocky seaward beach.

We can form no idea of the speed of the barges in the storm, for there was much meandering. The narratives do not imply much speed or progress westward; so that in the eight or nine days of going we should not expect them to make the distance from the Delta to Galveston. When they were fresh on the coast of Florida they were seven days rowing about one hundred miles. Naturally, therefore, we should look for *Mal-Hado* on the coast of Louisiana; and since Isle Dernier—Last Island—would seem both in size and position to fill the conditions, we should not pass it idly, especially if we confine our knowledge to Cabeza's account only. But when he says that he traded for more than fifty leagues inland from this island—a statement which we shall see that we may readily believe—we know that this distance would have brought him so near the Mississippi that he would not have omitted mention of so great a stream.

In the narrative of the *Inca* concerning the expedition of De Soto, it is stated that before the Spaniards reached the place where De Soto died they found houses with crosses on them, which were placed there, the narrator thinks, from the influence of Cabeza, by means of his religious instruction having passed from one tribe to another. Zárate-Salmerón notes the same thing, perhaps from the Inca's account, but he adds that it occurred thirty leagues northerly

from the mouth of the river at which De Soto died.¹ Cabeza notes that he traded in red ochre, bringing it from the inland to the coast tribes. Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, of the University of Texas, writes me that there was a supply of this paint in the neighborhood of the present town of Nagadoches, Texas, to which the Indians from great distances formerly resorted. It was doubtless to this, or to tribes near it, that Cabeza went trading; and east of this, not a hundred miles, the crosses were found by the men of De Soto.² The point is almost directly north of Galveston, and nearly within the reach of the "more than fifty leagues" for which distance inland Cabeza gives the customs of the tribes in a manner implying personal knowledge. It is considerably farther than this from Isle Dernier.

While there is now on this coast no island which fits the size of *Mal-Hado* as given by Cabeza, there are features of topography mentioned by Oviedo as being near it which cut Isle Dernier out; and in spite of its present size being doubly too great, these bring Galveston Island into consideration. We can not say now what the terrible storms of this coast may have done in nearly three centuries, when we know what they have done in a day; and this island may be larger now than it then was: but it is not likely that it has changed its relative position to certain rivers, which Oviedo notes in their order westward from *Mal-Hado*, and which can be found in such order on the real coast of the Gulf at no other place than west of Galveston Island, as has been admirably set forth by Brownie Ponton and Bates H. McFarland in *THE QUARTERLY* for January, 1898.

Westward, toward Pánuco on the Gulf coast of Mexico, was an *ancón*, or inlet, which, Oviedo says, Dorantes passed three times in wandering forward in search of food, making progress along the coast proper forty leagues. From certain signs he believed that this was "that which they called Espiritu Sancto." "He twice re-

¹Theodore Irving has erred in interpreting the *Inca*, as having these crosses found far westward on Moscoso's expedition into Texas. The *Inca* does not say so, and Miss Grace King has been led astray by Irving. I, however, have not seen the Spanish original, only the translation into French by Richelet.

²There is no longer any doubt that De Soto died at the mouth of Red River, not the Arkansas. Proof of this is involved in this paper, further on.

turned those forty leagues," and beyond this *ancón*, on his final journey, he went onward twelve leagues, to another *ancón*. We shall see that this comports with later statements. Finally when Dorantes and his party determined later to leave the island permanently, there were two men, an Asturian clergyman and a negro, on an island behind, or westward from *Mal-Hado*, and Cabeza de Vaca was on the main land—too sick to go. Pelican Island, now seen west of Galveston Island, may answer for this second isle.

Without trying to disentangle the mass of incidents given by Oviedo here, it is sufficient that he says that the Indians brought those two back to *Mal-Hado* across the *ancón* again, in a canoe, and took the whole party of about twelve—there is some discrepancy—over another *ancón* "for certain things which they gave them"; and "from there" they went two leagues to a great river, etc. Cabeza says that this party came by the place where he was sick, and that the twelve gave an Indian a costly robe of marten, which they had taken from a cacique in Florida, to guide them to him. If at the end of their journey with the Indians they were at Cabeza's place on the "mainland," or if the Indians put them well beyond Oyster Bay, as may have been likely (in order that they might not have to go around the northern arm of it), we can see how they might "from there" reach Oyster Creek in two leagues. Otherwise it is further.

2. *The Wandering from Mal-Hado to the Land of Tunas.*

(1) *Summary of the Oviedo narrative.*—Oviedo's account of their further journey comports so well with the topography of the region that the identification is almost irresistible:—

¹And from there they went two leagues to a great river, which was beginning to swell from floods and rains, and there they made rafts on which they crossed with much difficulty, because they had among them few swimmers; and thence they went three leagues to another river which came with much power and volume, and with such fury that fresh water went out with great moment into the sea. There, likewise, they made some rafts and crossed on them; and the first passed over well, because they were helped, but the second carried them to the sea, * * * and two men were

¹*Oviedo, 593, et seq.*

drowned, * * * and the raft went out with the current to the sea more than a league * * * [though] the wind was from the sea to the land. * * * From there they went forward three or four leagues and struck another river and there they found a barge of their own five, which they knew to be that in which had gone the book-keeper Alonso Enríquez and the commissary. * * * And they went five or six leagues further to another great river on which were two *ranchos* of Indians who fled; * * * and from the other side [*parte*] of the river Indians came to the Christians and knew them [as such] because in that neighborhood they had already seen those of the barge of the governor [De Narvaez] and of the barge of Alonso Enríquez.¹

* * * The day following they left there and on the fourth day, reached an *ancón*, two men having died on the way of hunger and fatigue * * * leaving only nine persons. That *ancón* was broad, about a league across, and made a point toward the region of Pánuco, which went out into the sea about a fourth of a league with some great mounds of white sand, which it might be supposed should be seen from far out at sea, and because of this they suspected that it was the River of the Holy Spirit [Río del Espíritu Santo.]² * * * Finally they found a broken canoe * * * and in two days which they were there they passed the *ancón*; * * * and they reached with much difficulty, [from weakness] a little [*pequeño*] *ancón*, which was twelve leagues further on * * * [which] had little width—which was only a river in breadth; and there they rested the day which they arrived.

Here, the next day, an Indian brought Figueroa with him to see them. He was one of the swimmers who had been sent forward from *Mal-Hado*, at the time of the wreck, to seek the way—the only one left; and he said that he had seen Esquivel, the only survivor from the barge of the governor. Esquivel said the people had landed from the barge, and had gone along the coast, because the barge was very light, and the governor had helped them over some *ancones* or rivers; and at the Espíritu Sanctu *ancón*, he had passed them over to the other side; but remaining himself in the barge

¹This hints that Dorantes in his search for food for forty leagues forward had not gone near these Indians, but they were so nomadic that they may not have been there then.

²They were judging from Pineda's description of the river which he discovered as he sailed east from Mexico, and they judged, it seems, solely by the sand hills which they say. This *ancón* must have impressed them as a *ráo* where the main bay emptied into the sea, and they must have considered only a small part of it, in order that its peninsula should seem to them only a fourth of a league, or half mile, long.

that night was swept out to sea, as nothing more was known of him. He furthermore said that all the governor's people had gone inland through certain lakes and submerged places and had died of hunger during the winter. Figueroa was now forced to go back westward with his Indian master, and only the Asturian clergyman and another could go with him, because none of the rest could swim. These went after fish, and one returned; but the Indians on the other shore loaded their houses in their canoes, and left, taking the other two Christians with them. The Christian who came back was the swimmer who had accompanied the Asturian. Later other Indians made a canoe and took the remaining white men to their houses, and then carried them further still; and they went in such a way that they expected never to see the other two whom the Indians had taken.

This outline of these details is given that we may see if from the descriptions we can form an idea of the location of this region beyond the narrow *ancón*, and to enable us to form a proper definition of the word.

¹Later those Indians sent five of the white men to other Indians, who they said were on another *ancón* six leagues onward. Three went to the new *ancón*, among whom was Castillo; and two went down more coastward and died of hunger; and Andres Dorantes, his cousin Diego Dorantes, and the negro remained in the *ranch*o of those who had first taken them—slaves. Still later the Indians sent these three also forward, and they found the dead bodies of some of those five sent before. From there [the most westward *ancón* six leagues from the narrow one] they went on and encountered other Indians; and there Andrés Dorantes saw one of the three (who did not go by the coast and who had gone further forward), and he said that the two swimmers had passed through there, naked, and swearing that they would not stop till they had reached a land of Christians; and Oviedo states that this one, who was Valdivieso, said that he saw the clothes, breviary, etc., of the Asturian there (beyond the narrow *ancón*); and he found that two days from there they had killed him, and a little beyond still they had killed another, Diego de Huelva, "because he passed from one house to an-

¹See *Oviedo*, 598, *et seq.*

other,"—a phrase used by Cabeza also in this connection.¹ There the Dorantes party were enslaved again.

Further details will now be given, that we may try to determine how far west this last bay was, and thus fix sundry points on the route along here, if possible.

It is stated by Oviedo that this people ate fish only, and thus had much less hunger than those inland; and he adds that they were scarce of drinking water, because they wandered among overflows and salt water, and that which they had to drink was scant and far off. They were a very coastward people, evidently. Here, Andrés Dorantes said, they remained fourteen months—in the years 1529 and 1530—and he was able to do nothing in the way of escape, because he was surrounded by water, filled with little islands, (for he was on a large island, plainly); but he finally passed "a great water" (the bay landward), and next day reached some Indians. Three months later the negro followed and found him. After ten months, Dorantes went on to other Indians more than twenty leagues further back, where was a river near the *ancón* Espíritu Santo, and there lived those Indians who had killed Esquivel. Here also Diego Dorantes had been slain. They killed mice which were abundant along between those rivers; but everything was scarce, because in winter they all went by or along that river from above to below and the reverse, seeking food. They took but little fish in that river except in April, when it overflowed.

There were on the banks [*en las costas*] of that river many nuts, which the Indians ate in their season, coming from twenty or thirty leagues round about. These nuts were much smaller than those of Spain.² Oviedo continues that at the end of May the Indians began to go to eat tunas, which fruit was very abundant in that country; and they went more than forty leagues forward toward Pánuco to eat them, where the tunas were in astonishing abundance. These were the great food of the year, and they lasted one and a half or two months. He says also that as the Indians go along the coast to eat tunas, they kill many deer³ by driving them into the sea, and they leave the salt water and go inland, "eating their

¹*Cabeza*, 77.

²Cabeza says these nuts "are of the size of those of Galicia, and the trees are very big and numerous."—*Cabeza*, 79.

³These were evidently the antelope of the plains, as may be seen from the La Salle narrations.

tunas," which "last for fifty or sixty days" from their ripening in August. This is inconsistent with the former statement about going to eat them in May, and perhaps has reference to another kind, since Cabeza notes at least three varieties. We shall see later that Oviedo gets matters mixed along here—especially dates. The narrative here appears to be that of Andrés Dorantes, and he seems to have gone back to this land of tunas westward; for he says, that there he, Castillo, and the negro agreed to escape some time before Cabeza came, but were separated in such a way that they could not plot further, and each went with his Indians to eat nuts, and there Cabeza joined them. Oviedo confirms Cabeza in saying that it was nearly two years yet before they could even agree to escape, and finally, after Cabeza came, they plotted to meet at a point where they were accustomed to eat tunas. From there they went inland to a place where they had been before, but to which their Indians had not gone this year, because there were no tunas there then, as they in some way seemed to know.

It was here that Dorantes, arriving first, met some Indians who also had just reached this place that day. The other Spaniards arrived later, and Castillo was already near there; and it was from this inland rather deserted region that the start was made that year, according to Oviedo. Cabeza notes the flight as starting from the land of tunas generally. They found it necessary, however, in order to obtain skins for clothing, which they were told they could not find further on, to remain in this region till the next year. Oviedo says it was in October [*por Octubre*] when they first left their Indian masters.

(2) *Digest of Cabeza's narrative.*—For the sake of comparison, a short review of the Cabeza narrative relative to those same events may be necessary:—

¹After remaining in the neighborhood of the Island for about six years Cabeza says that he finally persuaded his sole surviving companion to go forward; that since the latter could not swim, he carried this friend "across the inlets and four rivers on the coast." Thence he went to "an inlet [*ancón*] one league wide, very deep everywhere," and this he states seemed to him to be that of the Holy Ghost (*Espíritu Sancto*). The name of the Indians on the

¹*Cabeza, 76, et seq.*

west shore of this inlet was *Guevenes*, or *Quevenes*, as he has it elsewhere. These natives said that there were further on three men like him, and that the Indians still further beyond had killed Diego Dorantes, Valdivieso, and Huelva, "because they had gone from one house to another"; that "their neighbors," with whom was now Captain [Andrés] Dorantes, had killed Esquivel, on account of some dream, etc. Cabeza inquired about the country further on, and thus showed that in his forty or fifty leagues of trading along the coast¹ he had not gone beyond this *ancón*—a fact that places it, according to this account also about that far westward from *Mal-Hado*; since Cabeza says that in his coasting he was thus searching for a way to escape by.

Cabeza says² that Dorantes fled from the region where his fellows were slain (by the *Guaycones*, as we shall see later according to Cabeza's tribal arrangement), and went to the *Mariames*, who, he adds, had slain Esquivel, and who were the next tribe from those who had come to meet Cabeza and some Indians from further east, at the great inlet. This journey of Dorantes was that first flight backward which he went, according to Oviedo—the one on which he crossed the "great water." Cabeza has no special mention of the later and long journey of twenty leagues, except that part of it which refers to the coming of Dorantes to the river of nuts.³ This distinctly shows, however, that Dorantes fled across the "great water" on an eastward, not a westward, journey. After Dorantes' second flight from the *Mariames*, Cabeza says that "Castillo and Estevanico went inland to the *Iguaces*,"⁴ who, he says in another place, were neighbors of the *Mariames*. There is confusion here, for Oviedo says that those who killed Esquivel (*Mariames*, says Cabeza) lived on the river of nuts, a statement which we have reasons to accept, according to Cabeza's arrangement of tribes. They extended from about the mouth of the Guadalupe River to the true coast at the west end of Matagorda Island.

Cabeza notes that the Spaniards went to eat tunas with the Indians only thirty leagues away from this general nut region,⁵ but

¹*Cabeza*, 74.

²*Ibid.*, 87.

³*Ibid.*, 79.

⁴*Ibid.*, 89.

⁵*Ibid.*, 95.

he shows by incidents mentioned that this was the same journey around the coast which they made finally, and, from the end of which they went inland to escape and met the *Avavares*. Cabeza notes no inland going, for the start; and he has different details of assembling the group from those of Oviedo; but both agree that it was only one day inland from the tuna region till they met these first Indians with whom they spent the winter. These Cabeza names *Avavares*, or, in his summary of the tribes,¹ *Chauauares* [or *Chavavares*]; and he mentions much wandering and suffering with them, before they settle down, or reach their winter quarters,—details omitted by Oviedo.

(3) *Discussion of the islands, rivers, and ancones*.—We are now prepared to discuss, and, if possible, locate the various topographical features mentioned by the narratives, and thereby approximate the route of the two parties, in this region.

Some reasons have been given why Galveston Island is taken for the *Mal-Hado* of Cabeza. As noted, the first river west of it is more than the required leagues given by Oviedo; but we may justly believe that the Indians, in setting the Spaniards across the water, which was directly on their way—for pay—would have been required to land them beyond the northern extension of Oyster Bay; and thus landed the Spaniards would find it only about two leagues to Oyster River. This would not ordinarily be called a large river, but it was now at high flood, and answered that description.

The second river was the one with the furious current that carried the rafts immediately to the sea; and the Brazos will certainly answer to this. It is about three leagues from Oyster River, and the only powerful stream entering the sea directly on this coast.

The next was three or four leagues from the second—a condition filled by San Bernard River, where they found the deserted barge of Enríquez; and at “other five or six leagues” they found the fourth river, which was “great” [*grande*], and had two settlements of Indians on it. Caney River is about the first of these distances from the last stream, but it does not seem so “great,” unless again we recall that it was flood time when Dorantes passed. Cabeza says that all four of the rivers were called “great” by Dorantes, when the latter told him of their journey; but Cabeza himself simply says

¹*Cabeza*, 124.

"four rivers on the coast," when telling of his own trip past them. Naturally here the word "great" suggests the Colorado for this fourth stream; but it is too far from the third, and does not dis-embogue on the true coast. Oviedo shows by what the Indians said that the men of the governor's barge, and those from that of Enríquez, were walking along the coast, while the governor and a few others rowed or sailed along and near the shore; and the barge set those walking over the rivers and inlets. The Colorado with its broad mouth would be one over which they would most need the aid of the barge; but it is not at all probable that the governor went twenty miles on to Pass Cavallo, and twenty back, to set them over. The Dorantes party was now passing the same crossing as that passed by the men of the governor, according to the Indians, who had seen the latter; so it is almost demonstrated that none of these three parties went around the east point of Matagorda Bay, and passed inland, or crossed the Colorado or even went along the northern edge of the narrow peninsula. There seems to be no evidence in the narratives that any of these Spaniards ever saw the Colorado, unless it was Cabeza when he made those early trading and exploring trips forty or fifty leagues west of *Mal-Hado*. He doubtless knew too much to try to reach Pánuco in that way.¹ Dorantes said that he had crossed the *ancón* several times before this on his preliminary trips, as he "went through the length of the coast forty leagues forward."² Probably all these parties went down the southern margin of Matagorda Peninsula, in which case Caney River would be the fourth river Cabeza and Dorantes speak of crossing.

Four days from here, says Oviedo, they came to an *ancón*, or inlet, which lay so that it formed a point half a mile long toward Pánuco. Four days, as they travelled, fatigued and searching the sea coves for crawfish and "rockweed," whatever that was, would not exceed the distance from Caney River to Pass Cavallo, which is certainly the next *ancón*. So far, I have left this word in the original purposely, to show its more specific meaning in these narratives as

¹It is plain that none of these—especially the Dorantes party—ever knew the extent of the Matagorda Peninsula, else they would never have described the bay as making a point seaward only half a mile long. For this reason they knew nothing of its northern edge nor of the mouth of the Colorado.

²*Oviedo*, 592.

referring in nearly every case to a narrow strip of water, which was either the inlet from the sea to an expanded bay, or a strait between two islands or an island and the mainland. This is especially so with Oviedo, who uses the word most. The first port on the Florida coast proper was "*una bahia que era baxa*"—another word for an expanded sheet. A day further the governor goes by land, and at night comes to "*una bahia que entra por la tierra*"—a bay that goes inland.¹ Undeniably these are Charlotte Harbor and Tampa Bay—the only such on this coast; and it may be seen that the *ancón* idea is not in them, and the word, therefore, is not used about them. Later on he speaks of swampy arms of the sea as "*baxas*" (*bajas*), and notes "*lagunas*" in the same region. He has a word for inundated places (*anegados* or *anegadicos*) and another (*paludes*) for permanent swamps. When the barges started along the Florida coast Oviedo says they went seven days *through* those "*baxas*," and entered many "*ancones*," which last "they struck along that coast," and the "*baxas* went inland. One needs only to examine the bays from that of Santa Rosa to that of Mobile to get a clear conception of what Oviedo means by these words. For any indefinite expansion, of which he seems to know not the name, he uses the phrase, "*una agua grande*,"² (a great water). Knowing, therefore, what the narrators mean, we have no difficulty in seeing that the route lay wholly along the coast of the gulf proper, and was not inland around some broad bay, as has been maintained. Like the rivers, the *ancones* are there now in proper sequence, and they enable us to form very definite ideas of the end of this stage of the great journey. The first, which Cabeza calls the "great," was Pass Cavallo; and the crossing of the Dorantes party was evidently to Matagorda Island—not to the mainland. Thence Oviedo says they went twelve leagues (30 miles) to the little one, narrow as a river. This was surely Cedar Creek, which is the proper distance from Pass Cavallo, and, according to Cabeza, about that from *Mal-Hado*; for he says that when the Dorantes party had reached this place, they had lost two men in going sixty leagues, though, from Oviedo, we should infer this to be only about fifty leagues—twelve and forty—which comports with the actual distance. The

¹*Oviedo*, 584.

²*Ibid.*, 599.

Indians told the Dorantes party that six leagues further on there was another *ancón*, to which statement Aransas Pass answers with sufficient accuracy.

(4) *The River of Nuts.*—There is mentioned in both narratives a river, as if it were situated quite near the first great *ancón*. Cabeza certainly implies that he crossed this “great” inlet to the mainland — not to Matagorda Island—where he finds Indians, who had come to meet those who were with him. He says that he remained with these—the *Guevenes*—while his companion returned across the inlet. He says that after these Indians had given him much information, (and after he had evidently been with them sometime) they told him that in two days the Dorantes party “would come to a place about a league from there on the shore of that river to feed on nuts.”¹ Oviedo says that Dorantes went (back east) to the river of nuts near the Espíritu Santo *ancón*. Let us recall that while he was west of this, he had crossed from the marginal islands and was now inland, having passed a great water; and, since it may be seen that the Espíritu Santo is the same in both narratives, we may be sure that the Colorado can not be this river of nuts. It is too far east. As, according to Oviedo, it was a river of length and importance to the tribes, the choice is left between the Lavaca and the Guadalupe. We shall see later that the relative positions of the tribes and the distance over which Dorantes returned to this river—the twenty leagues—favor the latter.

With regard to Cabeza’s statement that the Indians mentioned that this river was “a league from there,” i. e., from some point on the mainland, we may see that he was not necessarily at the great *ancón* at the time of this estimate. He was with the tribe that lived west of it, and they had come to meet the Deaguenes at the *ancón*. The inference is that their abiding place was then at a distance from the *ancón* —doubtless on the river of nuts. Again, it must be noted that his “there” (from which the river was only a league) was on the edge of another tribe, since the Indian who told him of the coming of the Dorantes party, and offered to lead him to them, spoke a different language from that of Cabeza’s Indians.²

¹*Cabeza*, 78.

²*Ibid.*, 80.

As this savage was going to visit those with whom Dorantes was, he was likely one of that tribe—the *Mariames*, the same with whom Dorantes was now, since they were the same that killed Esquivel, as we have already seen. These *Mariames* were the second tribe beyond the *ancón*, according to Cabeza, and hence here is evidence, inasmuch as they came from the west with Dorantes to the river of nuts, that this river was west of the great *ancon* at least the width of a tribe—if not further. Nothing but the Guadalupe will satisfy these conditions.

Considering the one day journey of Dorantes across the “great water,” and the twenty leagues further back to the river of nuts, which he went, and keeping in view also Cabeza’s location of the tribes, we shall see that a more eastern position for this river is not indicated, unless Dorantes did not get so far west as Oviedo attests by the itinerary and Cabeza implies by the situation of the tribes. To review Dorantes’s limits:—We might infer from the combination of the two accounts, that Dorantes met Figueroa three leagues beyond the narrow *ancón*—our Cedar Creek; for Oviedo says that it was twelve leagues to this pass, and Cabeza says that they met “another of our parties” (who was Figueroa, of course), when they had gone fifteen leagues from the first *ancón*. But this twelve and fifteen are two different estimates of the distance between the *ancones*, made by the two narratives, since Figueroa and his Indian came over water to where the other “nine” were, and he came from the other side [*parte*] of an *ancón*, so narrow that the white men could see and call to the Indian there. The only two swimmers of the party went back with him. This starts Figueroa and these swimmers on St. Joseph’s island. Turning to Cabeza,¹ we note that he makes Figueroa say that some time before that, while with these same Indians here, he learned from them that with the *Mariames* there was a Christian who had come on with the *Guevenes*; and he adds that with these, this stranger came on over to the other, or western, side of the narrow *ancón* and met him (Figueroa) there. This was the Esquivel already noted—one of the commissary’s men, who was still struggling on west, from the great *ancón*, where the governor was lost, and where lived these *Guevenes*. Naturally the inference is that Figueroa was then with the tribe

west of the *Mariames*. These were the *Guaycones*, according to Cabeza's enumeration of the tribes,¹ and they were on the coast,² and, it would now seem, occupied at least the east end of St. Joseph's Island, which was just across the narrow *ancón*. The second day after Figueroa went back two Indians, whom the whites still could call to on the other side of the narrow *ancón*, took the remaining Christians over the *ancón* in a canoe to their houses, since they were from a *rancho* near by. Two days later, still those of this *rancho* moved, and, taking these Spaniards with them, they must have gone some distance, along this island, since it was done "in a manner that they were never more able to see the other two Christians which those Indians had taken."³

But these Christians were such a burden to keep that those Indians sent five of them on to another *ancón*, which they said was forward six leagues.⁴ This was doubtless Aransas Pass. So far, the location of all is clear, with the presumption that the two swimmers were on ahead along the edge of the bay. Oviedo states that Castillo, Valdivieso, and Huelva stayed at this last *ancón* "much time," and the other two of the five went "further down to the coast," which means on the southeastern edge of the island.

Oviedo recapitulates here, seeming to give the detailed narrative of Dorantes about the death of the others, how the latter subsequently had met Valdivieso who was from the other bank or shore [*parte*], and who there at the furthest *ancón*, had heard of the passing onward of the swimmers, and of their death further on.

There is no evidence that Dorantes himself ever left the island of St. Joseph on any *forward* journey, and here he became enslaved; here the people had fish and fared better than those inland; here they went about through salt swamps, destitute of good water; here he, Castillo, and the negro pulled the canoes of the Indians about in the great heat through those "*anegados*," or shallow swales on the margin of the island. It was these westward neighbors of the

¹Cabeza, 124.

²There is much evidence from Cabeza that the territory of the *Mariames* extended to the coast proper, though he says they were in front of and further inland from the Guevenes. Doubtless their inland village was, but they are mentioned as being at the narrow *ancón* or Cedar Creek on the true coast.

³Oviedo, 395.

⁴*Ibid.*, 598.

Mariames who did all this killing, and were the *Guaycones* still, according to Cabeza; and here, among small islands, entirely "surrounded by water," as Dorantes said, they remained fourteen months, slaves. From the west end of this island it may be seen, therefore, Dorantes crossed the "great water," and fled as far as he could, which would be naturally inland for a while, having thus crossed Aransas Bay east of Harbor Island, then going around C6pano Bay, he doubtless made a wide detour further inland to avoid the coast Indians, who had treated him badly, and who, Cabeza says, were so much more cruel and dangerous than those of the interior. In this way, twenty leagues, or fifty two miles, would not pass the Guadalupe River, but would stretch about the proper distance to reach it, where everything else comports so well. The Colorado is out of the question, and the Lavaca is eliminated by the inevitable position of the *Mariames* west of the tribe at the great *anc6n*; for they were the people who killed Esquivel, at the river of nuts, so evidently the Guadalupe—the nearest one to the great *anc6n* in Dorantes's march back or Cabeza's march forward.

(5) *The point of escape.*—Cabeza evidently met these other Christians first among the *Mariames*, well inland, and he says that for a while he was in the same family with Dorantes. Later the latter fled from these (but to where is not said), while Castillo and the negro "went inland to the *Iguaces*."¹ There is no evidence that Cabeza changed tribes, before the trip to the tunas, or the final escape. Both Oviedo and Cabeza give the customs of the *Mariames*, in great detail, and with much unanimity. From them to the very abundant tuna region, Oviedo says they went along the coast toward P6nuco "more than forty leagues," while Cabeza says that after six months the "Indians went for tunas at a distance of thirty leagues from there." The two men may have counted from two different places in the tribe, or by different routes; for they met in the tuna region and did not go there together; or they may simply have differed in their estimates of the distance, or the extent of country ranged over in the tuna fields. Either of these distances will reach from the

¹It will be seen from this that the *Iguaces* were more inland than the *Mariames*, and yet touched the coast neighbors of the latter—the *Guaycones*. (See Cabeza, 89.)

Guadalupe River region considerably beyond Corpus Christi Bay, and place the abundant tunas in Nueces County.

There is something, however, in the sequence of the tribes as given in his summary of them¹ and in his itinerary of the escaping journey and in his mention of their relative positions at other places,² which tends to the conviction that Cabeza's distance, measured from the river of nuts region is the more approximate, and which tends to place the tuna region (and hence the tribe known as "those of the figs") just immediately beyond Corpus Christi Bay.

(6) *The Tribes*.—For ready reference let us place here Cabeza's summary, and in connection with this and the itinerary furnish a map that shall show the situation of the tribes—at least relatively, if not actually. Says Cabeza:³

"I also do wish to tell of the nations and languages met with from the Island of Ill-Fate [*Mal-Hado*] to the last ones, the *Cuchendados* [never further mentioned or otherwise located]. On the Island of Ill-Fate two languages are spoken, the ones they called *Capoques*, the other *Han*. On the mainland, facing the island, are others called of *Charruco*, who take their name from the woods in which they live. Further on, along the seashore, are others, who call themselves *Dequenes*,⁴ and in front of them others named those of *Mendica*. Further on, on the coast, are the *Quevenes*, [just beyond the great *ancón*, he says elsewhere], and in front, further inland the *Mariames*,⁵ and following the coast we come to the *Guaycones*⁶ and in front of them inland the *Yeguaces*.⁷ After those come the *Atayos*, and behind them others, called *Decubadaos*, of whom there are a great many further on in that direction. On the coast live the *Quitoles*⁸ and in front of them, inland, the *Chau-*

¹*Cabeza*, 123-124.

²*Ibid.*, 77, 79, 82, 83, 86, 87, 89, 96, 97, 99, 111, 112.

³Pp. 123-124.

⁴Elsewhere Cabeza refers to these as *Deaguanes* (p. 79), and speaks of "when I was with the *Aguenes*" (p. 120), evidently the same people. In the original of the 1555 print, the word above used is *Doguenes*.

⁵Just beyond the river of nuts.

⁶Who, he says (p. 77) killed Valdivieso and several others of the Spaniards, which we have seen was on St. Joseph's Island.

⁷Elsewhere referred to as being more inland and neighbors just west of or onward from, the *Mariames*. He calls them *Iguaces*, also.

⁸Perhaps on the west end of St. Joseph's Island, or at least west of Aransas Bay.

auares.¹ These are joined by the *Maliacones*² and the *Cultalchulches* and others called *Susolas* and *Comos*.³ Ahead on the coast are the *Camolas*,⁴ and further on those whom we called the people of the figs.

All these people have homes and villages and speak different languages."

In connection with the location of these "Fig people" are two interesting statements, one from Oviedo and the other from Cabeza. It will be recalled that Oviedo says⁵ that Dorantes went westward to another *ancón* where some others had been sent by the Indians six leagues beyond the narrow *ancón*. Here he found Valdivieso, who was of the other *parte*, or shore. In all previous places in this connection this phrase "*otra parte*" is used for the "other shore" of an *ancón*. So it would seem as if Valdivieso had been on Mustang Island, which is likely, since "he told how the other two Christian swimmers had passed through there," and he said to Dorantes that he had seen their clothes and the breviary of the Asturian.

Then Valdivieso returns, and he and his companions are killed more westward, all on Mustang Island, since it was beyond the "*otra parte*" of the *ancón* which was six leagues west of the narrow one—Aransas Pass. The *Guaycones* were, therefore, beyond this last *ancón*, for it was they, Cabeza says, who did this killing. Cabeza says⁶ that during the winter which they spent with the *Avavares* these "told us they had seen the Asturian and Figueroa with other Indians on the coast, which we had named of the figs. Since, so far, this phrase, "on the coast," has always referred to the strictly seaward edge of the island stretches along the gulf proper, we may conclude that it refers to the same here; and the two accounts are about the same incident. But Cabeza says also⁷ that Valdivieso and Huelva were killed by the neighbors of the *Mariames*—the *Guaycones* still. This pushes the Fig People well west, since there

¹Elsewhere (p. 99) called the *Avavares*.

²Northwestward, as we may see from the itinerary.

³Quite likely the same called by Cabeza (p. 105) *Coayos*, since these are there placed in the same relationship.

⁴Elsewhere (p. 97) called the *Camones*.

⁵P. 598.

⁶P. 110.

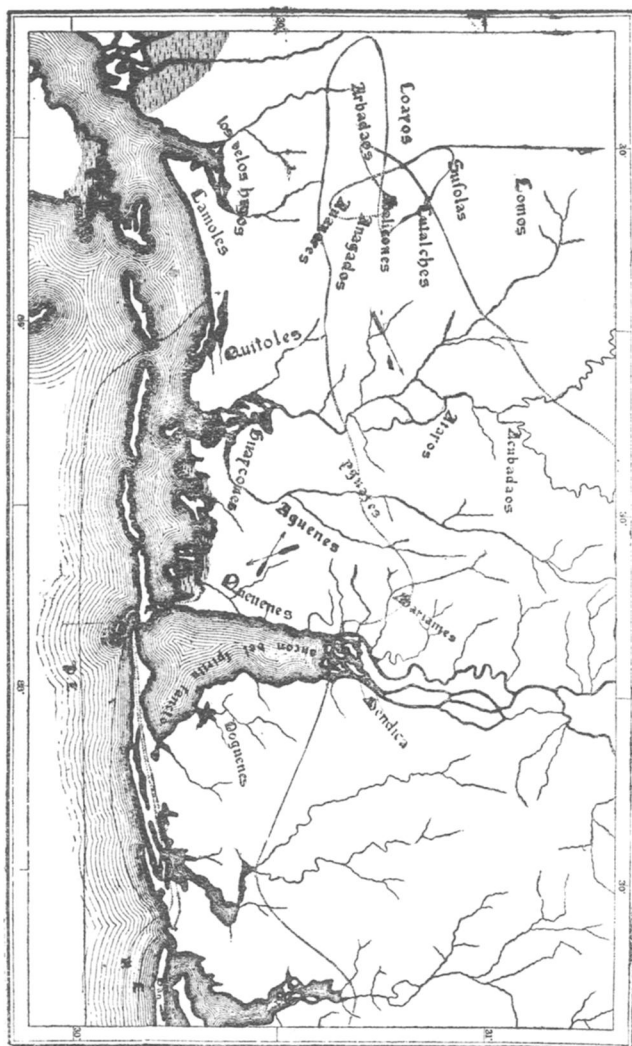
⁷P. 77.

were two tribes between these and the *Guaycones*. The one just east was the *Camones*, or *Camoles*, who killed the men of the barge of Tellez. We may infer, therefore, that the stranding of this barge was off of, or at least onward as far as, the west end of Mustang Island, since Valdivieso, who had been over there, makes no mention of the event in his report, "from the other side," to Dorantes; and Dorantes makes no note of having heard of it. As Cabeza, Dorantes, Castillo, and Estevanico, while with the *Anagados*, who had Castillo at the time of the start to the *Avavares* from the tuna region, saw the clothes of the men of Tellez, and heard that "the barge was still there stranded," the matter would seem to have been one of such importance that the savages would have spoken of it to Dorantes, had he got this far west. In like manner Valdivieso would have heard of it. Furthermore, since these *Anagados* must have been just off inland from the *Camones*—the murderers—and were near to the place where Cabeza and Dorantes were eating tunas then, it would seem that Cabeza and Dorantes never reached the Fig People just beyond, on *this* trip, and hence to escape, went inland,—as Oviedo says they did—from the region just east of Corpus Christi Bay. This very definitely locates the *Anagados* northwest of the inland tip of Corpus Christi Bay, and the final start, a year later, was from some point just slightly northwest of this, wherever was the village of the *Avavares*—perhaps on the Aransas River, since the *ranchos* were usually on streams. But the Fig people were beyond Corpus Christi Bay; and if the Spaniards ever got that far west, it was on some trip for tunas previous to the one at which they escaped.

I submit, also, a copy of Buckingham Smith's map of the tribes in this connection. It will be seen that he makes the *Aguenes* and *Dequenes*—*Deaquenes* in another place—different tribes, and places the *Mariames* too far inland to be encountered by passing purely along the coast.¹ He places, if I understand his topography, the Fig people and the *Avavares* group around and off inland from Aransas Bay. He does not have the *Guaycones* and the *Mariames* neighbors, as the account demands, and he has the *Iguaces* less, rather than more, inland than the *Mariames*. Cabeza says they

¹He is led astray by Cabeza's statement that the *Mariames* were "further inland" from the *Quevenes*. We may, however, justly infer that at the time they met Figueroa and slew Esquivel they were on the coast.

Buckingham Smith's map of the Indian Tribes named by Cabeza de Vaca.



were more. His whole scheme is influenced by a preconceived far inland route for Cabeza, which he subsequently modified.

3. *From the Land of the Tunas to the region of the Iron Mountain.*

1. *The time and the itinerary.* — The two accounts, when all things are considered, appear to agree as to the time of going to the *Avavares*. Cabeza, counting the months by moons solely, says he escaped from his Indians on the 16th of September, or a little past the full moon, when the new moon was on the first; and Oviedo says that the next day, as they approached the new Indians, it was already the time for the tunas to be gone, "*porque era por octubre*"—because it was through or during October, literally—but we find later that he says that it was the first of the month; for he says that they staid there among these Indians "*dende primero de octubre hasta el mes de agosto*," "from the first of October to the month of August." Then they regarded the tunas sufficiently ripe for them to start. Not counting August, this makes ten months, "according to the reckoning of the moons," while Cabeza states that they remained with the *Avavares* eight months, and mentions no lingering with any other tribes near them,—the excursion to the *Susolas*¹ seeming to take place in the meantime.² The "eighteen" months on page 111 of the Bandelier translation is a misprint, since the original has "*ocho*" (eight). Cabeza notes at least ten days of wandering in an indefinite direction with the *Avavares*, before they settle for winter. This was immediately before the side visit to the *Susolas*. All this is omitted by Oviedo.

In August, according to Oviedo's specific statement, or in June, or the last of May, by inference from Cabeza's dates and periods,³ the party set out on its final journey. The mere "time of the tunas" does not help us here, as much as it would appear, for we find this "eating" referred to at all seasons, and it is at times, hard to determine whether they were eating fresh or dried fruit, ripe or

¹*Cabeza*, 105-107.

²We shall see that Cabeza is the more nearly correct.

³Later, we shall see that this was really about the first of July, Oviedo being evidently in error.

green, or merely the leaves. These latter Cabeza says they baked, and Oviedo says they buried them from one day to the other (to make them "less rough") and some were boiled, [*cocidas*]. After they had been on the way thirteen days, Oviedo mentions green tunas that were beginning to ripen, and a day later, good ones.¹

In about thirty-one days, according to Oviedo, they came to a large river, which both accounts compare with the Guadalquivir at Seville. The first day they went seven leagues, and this distance may be taken as a day's journey, when nothing hinders them. On one other they went "eight or nine great leagues," another only five. On the second day out they stopped, and for eight days they tarried to eat of a bitter, milky-juiced small fruit [*granillos* in Oviedo], noted by both. There were large forests of the bearing trees. At another place they rested fifteen days, which, deducting time lost in other ways, would leave only about eight of actual travel. Cabeza notes² that they got lost one day, at the end of which they stayed in the woods, and they must have spent much of the next finding the trail again. Oviedo also speaks of their being lost once.

Cabeza is not so definite in this itinerary, but he has only five days of actual travel. He places the region of mesquite east of the large river, and has at least one day spent in a feast there. Oviedo has it that "before sunset" they came to the river, and as it grew dark they came to one hundred *ranchos* beyond. From this, the next morning, they went a league and a half to another *pueblo* where the Indians gave them mesquite meal.

However this may be, there is evidence that so far more than six days were spent in travel, which would roundly amount to forty leagues, or about 100 miles to the river—a distance which would reach from the center of the *Avavares*, in central San Patricio County, to the Frio River in central Frio County, north of the junction with the Lena fork.

As to the character of this stream, Cabeza says:³ "It may have been as wide as the one of Sevilla, and had a swift current." Oviedo notes⁴ that it seemed to them to be wider than the Guadal-

¹After the full discussion of the route, this topic will be taken up anew in detail.

²P. 115.

³P. 129.

⁴P. 604.

quiver in Sevilla; that the water came first to the knee, then to the thigh, and for the length of some two lances, to the breast. "without any danger." Whether the Frio, along here, will answer to this, I can not say. Mr. Alexander Deussen, of the University of Texas, who has been indefatigably patient in aiding me in these studies, calls attention to the statement of Professor Robert T. Hill in the Eighteenth Report of the United States Geological Survey, page 208, in which occurs the following concerning the Frio River, rather inland:—

"It is almost impossible for the traveler who has seen the continuation of this stream in the dry region of the Rio Grande Plain to recognize in it the beautiful flowing river now before him. Forests of ash, pecan and elm fill the valley, while gigantic cypresses border the water. If he should chance upon one of those water holes, without having traced the continuity of the stream course, he would believe that he stood upon the banks of a large and continuously flowing river. He would soon find, however, that after flowing a short distance, the water would disappear, either by disappearance into the bed of the gravel-filled stream-way or through fissures in the solid underbed. These running water holes are constant, and do not depend upon the local rains, but are supplied by perennial springs draining the rocks underlying the plateau."

It seems quite probable that near such holes large villages would be located, and that over one of these the Spaniards passed, feeling very naturally that they had crossed a large stream with a "swift current"; and since the bed is "gravel-filled" we may realize the significance of Oviedo's phrase "without danger," as there was no danger of miring. We can see, therefore, how the Frio might fill all the conditions.

It was at the hundred *ranchos* just beyond this river that they first found the rattles made of gourds, which latter the Indians said floated down the rivers in time of floods.¹ Cabeza is indefinite about the time from here to the place where they first saw mountains. Since he says that at the hundred *ranchos* they brought them the next morning "every living soul of that village to be touched by us and to have the cross made over them," and then adds that "The next day we went on," we may infer a day's rest

¹*Cabeza*, 129.

here. Oviedo says¹ that the day following they went a league and a half to a village of seventy or eighty *ranchos* where they stayed two days. Thence Oviedo notes six leagues to the Indians that were blind in one or both eyes (who Cabeza says were whiter than any met yet), and thence "five leagues onward" to a river at the foot of the point [*punta*] of the mountains. This would make the whole distance between the two rivers, according to Oviedo, twelve and a half leagues, as they went it, or about thirty-two miles. Actually, the distance to the next stream of consequence from the Frio is about fifty in a direct line.

While Cabeza notes no distance along here, he has details which would imply greater time than that given by Oviedo. From the hundred *ranchos*, he goes "to other Indians," and as these gave "us * * * the deer they had killed during the day" we may infer that a night was spent here; and "So we left there also, going to others"; and he must have stayed all night there, for he says "they rejoiced and danced so much as not to let us sleep." "After we left those we went to many other lodges, but thence on there prevailed a new custom," etc. Oviedo has this "*nueva forma*" occur immediately at (or after the departure from) the hundred *ranchos*, and thence has omitted a stage or more noted by Cabeza. This stage, however, can not amount to more than one day, since Cabeza says that it was the "following day" after going to the "many other lodges" that they reached the blind Indians. It was here, Cabeza says, that they began to see mountains, and Oviedo notes that "near there were the mountains." If we may credit Cabeza's more detailed account, we shall have added to Oviedo's thirteen leagues another day, which is enough to make the full twenty leagues required between the Frio at the crossing and the Nueces at the foot of the "point" of the Anacho Mountains, beyond which the West Nueces continues in the same direction in which the route has so far come. This point is in the region of, say, twenty miles west of Uvalde.

Concerning these mountains, both call them *sierras*. Cabeza says,² "and it seemed as if they swept down from the direction of the North Sea, and so, from what the Indians told us, we believe

¹Pp. 604, 605.

²P. 133.

they are fifteen leagues from the ocean." Mr. Bandelier infers from this reference to the "North Sea" that the mountains here mentioned extended, "at least approximately, from east to west."¹ This may have seemed so to Cabeza, for he may have glanced along the escarpment leading around eastward. But Oviedo looked northward; for he says,² "Near there were the mountains [*sierras*] and there seemed [to be] a *cordillera* of them which crossed the country directly to the north." Evidently this account refers to the second elevation of hills, or the dissected Cambrian escarpment which traverses Texas in a northerly direction, since Oviedo says³ they went inland along its margin [*halda*] directly northward for a great distance before crossing west into it. Cabeza says also that they followed the skirts of the mountains [*haldas*] for more than fifty leagues going at first up a river.

The only drawback to this location of what Oviedo calls "the point where commences the said range" is that Cabeza says that from Indian information, he believed that they were only fifteen leagues, or forty miles, from the sea. This point near Uvalde is, of course, irreconcilably further. It is not at all unlikely that the Spaniards misunderstood the Indians here, and that the latter may have signed something about a "great water," that may have meant the Rio Grande, which is about this distance away. Mr. Bandelier, in his "Contributions," has said that the sea must have been this near, because Oviedo had said that they were near enough for the tribes at the mountains to send to the coast for their friends to come and see the wonderful white men; and the next day they came. But here again the great student has misconstrued his authority; for Oviedo says simply, "And immediately that night they sent to call people below *toward* the sea [*mar*]," using *hacia* [toward] and no word meaning *entirely to* the sea. Next day they came. These people were likely on or near the Rio Grande. If this party had gone this distance (which they had now come) around the coast so that they should now be only forty miles from the sea, they would, before this, have crossed the Rio Grande—a preposterous conception, as will be convincingly shown before this

¹*Cabeza*, p. 133, footnote.

²P. 605.

³P. 606.

paper closes. It may be as well said here, as a guide to the further tracing of this route, that there can no longer be any doubt in the mind of any fair-minded student that this party went up the Rio Grande for at least seventeen days, and crossed it finally not far from the Texas-New Mexico line. The proof of this will occur in its place. In connection with the sixty to ninety leagues that this journey must yet continue northerly, to satisfy the demands of both narratives, the hypothesis that it went in a southerly curve around the coast is not tenable. There is no record of any turn in it for many leagues yet, and when it did turn away from the coast "*inland*"¹ it was "*derecho al Norte*"² both of which statements the De Soto chroniclers confirm. This alone would place Judge Bethel Coopwood's claim for an all coast route toward Jalisco out of consideration.

(2) *The inland turn.*—It has been usual for students, when they consider this inland turn at all, to note a great discrepancy just here between the two accounts, because Cabeza speaks of fifty leagues and Oviedo of eighty leagues as consumed on the northern stage now about to be undertaken; but a brief study of the two narratives will show that they do not conflict so much as may appear. Oviedo first has the party go from a tribe he has just mentioned—the white Indians of Cabeza—to eight lodges, sleep the next night "on the way," and arrive the third night at a village of "many *ranchos*." Then he states that in "*that manner* they went along by the skirts of the *sierras*, eighty leagues, a little more or less, entering through the country inland, directly to the North." It will be observed that he bases his start from the "*white*" Indians. Cabeza notes that after leaving these they went the first day to "twenty lodges,"³ which we know to be the same as Oviedo's eight *ranchos*, because the same things are recorded as happening there. Then, without detail he says⁴ they traveled with these natives three days "to where there were many Indians,"⁵ and from there he adds "we turned inland for more than fifty leagues, following the slopes of the

¹*Cabeza*, 138.

²*Oviedo*, 606.

³*Cabeza*, 136.

⁴P. 138.

⁵This is again evidently Oviedo's "many ranches."

mountains, and at the end of them [the fifty leagues] met forty dwellings." Hence, according to Oviedo, Cabeza's fifty leagues began three days later than his *eighty*; and according to Cabeza they began four days later. Now four days' travel amounts to thirty leagues, and the discrepancy is accounted for, or found not to exist.

At the end of the inland journey they found forty "dwellings," says Cabeza, and Oviedo adds that they were at the foot of the *sierra*, and the Indians here said that they were from a more inland region, and were on the way to their own land.¹ Both accounts mention receiving the copper rattle here, which was from the north. Oviedo says later that at this point they had come "one hundred and fifty leagues, a little more or less, from where they had commenced to journey." Since we have seen that there were eight or more days of actual travel from the *Avavares* to the river at the foot of the mountains, or about seventy leagues, and since it is from this point that Oviedo measures his eighty leagues inland, we may see that he is very consistent in his estimates, as the seventy from the total one hundred and fifty leave eighty.

Oviedo says nothing about where this northward journey terminates, except that they could still turn west into the mountains at the end of it. Since he makes no mention of a great river, it seems probable that he did not reach the Colorado, though, it must be admitted that his and Cabeza's "beautiful river," on which they found the next village just a day west over a mountain could have been on this stream; and the number of leagues inland will lead forty miles beyond it northward, unless there was great meandering on the way.

Beyond this, till he gets to what is evidently the Rio Grande, Oviedo has not a single detail of the way that may aid us topographically, except the mention of a very great abundance of piñons. Cabeza has details² that are quite definite, but not always consistent with any topography, or sequence of topography, that can be recognized. He has a large river coming from the north which he crosses in company with the Indians beyond the beautiful stream; then there is a plain of thirty leagues to a

¹They were likely Caddo stock from the Red River Valley.

²Pp. 144-150.

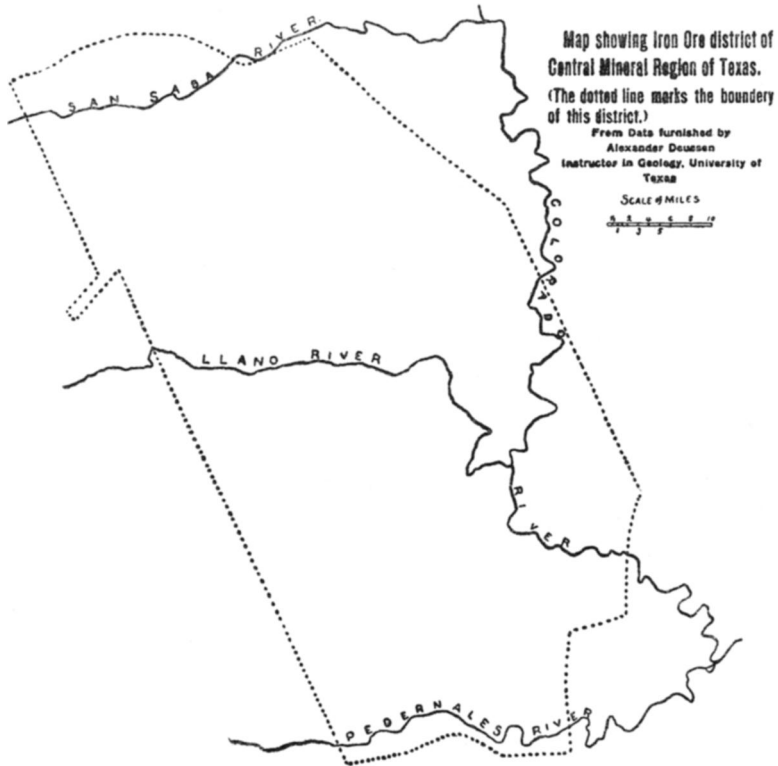
new people who come to meet them from afar; then another stretch of fifty leagues "through a desert of very rugged mountains"; thence "finally" [with distance beyond the mountains indefinite] "we . . . forded a very big river, with its water reaching to our chest." This last must have been fairly near the chain, for he immediately notes "a plain beyond the chain of mountains," where again people "came to meet us from a long distance." From this point to the next river which flowed "between [or among] mountains"—the Rio Grande, as we shall see—where permanent houses were found, it was about thirty leagues, by his itinerary, as well as by that of Oviedo.

This preview is given that we may return and better discuss the situation of the end of the inland journey to the north.

If we consider that they got beyond the Colorado, and that as they turned west (as is intimated and surely happened), they would recross this stream, which might be "the big river coming from the north," somewhere east of Llano or San Saba Counties, since that is the only place where it can be said to come from the north. Previous to this, however, Cabeza notes going through so many tribes that no one could "recall them all," and speaks of their following him through extensive valleys rich in game, with mountains on the sides. No direction is given. It is doubtful if any country just north of the Colorado in this region will fill the conditions—certainly not if the direction is required to be westward at this stage of the way. But on the west side of this river the valleys of the Llano, the San Saba, and the Concho run west, and lead on in the line of the journey, as does the greater river itself bordering San Saba and McCulloch Counties. However, Cabeza does not say that they were going parallel to the general course of the rivers, and they may have been intersecting these valleys.

There is one statement in Cabeza's narrative which seems to fix the limit of the inland journey at some point south of the Colorado. At the end of his fifty leagues he says that leaving the place where they received the copper rattle, they went next day across a mountain seven leagues long the stones of which were *scoriae* or slags of iron. Whatever may be the east and west limits of the position of this mountain, there is no possibility for it to be north of the

Colorado, since the iron deposits of this region do not extend so far north. I submit a map, furnished me by Mr. Alexander Deussen, of the extent of the iron ores of this part of the state, running



from Blanco County to McCulloch. It could have been possible for this party to have come around the edge of the Balcones escarpment from Uvalde, past Hondo and the region west of Boerne and on into the mountainous and ferruginous parts of Blanco county, where possibly some hill with iron stained stones might answer Cabeza's conditions—while the Colorado could be the beautiful river, if they bore well to the northwest. From here they could easily have passed this stream, without further mention, and drifting more inland (perhaps with those natives who Oviedo says belonged in that direction), could have easily reached a place where

they could have crossed the Colorado again as it came from the north. However I do not consider this very probable.

The best that I can do here, with my lack of local knowledge of the topography, is to discuss suggestions. Against this view is Oviedo's statement that they went "directly north," and in favor of it very strongly is the positive statement of both narratives that they refused to go to the mountains or into them, but kept along the edges. But when any direction was last indicated in that great inland journey they were going up a river, and no river here runs at all easterly; however, no mention of this river is made even a few days later, and they may have abandoned it. If they continued up it, their way was almost certainly up one or the other branch of the Nueces, which seems to enter the mountains and violate the conditions. It will be recalled that it was possibly the Rio Grande which they thought to be the sea. If this theory should be correct, the direction inland would be at right angles to the direction toward it, at the point where they first saw the mountains. This would lead them from Uvalde around the edge of the Balcones escarpment to the Blanco iron region; and much of this course would be directly north, after a few leagues were passed—the thirty, say, that Cabeza omits before they turn directly inland. While there are yet too many leagues from the Uvalde region to any iron fields north of it, this last way disposes of more of them than any other. It is actually about fifty leagues by this route, but we can not say how much they may have meandered in and out of the various dissections of this escarpment, for they are silent on every detail of this great stretch.

Up the general lead of the Nueces, directly northward, the dilemma of too much distance is greater; and the limits of the iron region here curtail it. If they went this way, Cabeza's iron mountain was probably found near the southeast corner of Mason County, just off the Blue Mountains. Mr. Deussen sends a sketch map of the ferruginous lands of this part, and suggests the possibility of a certain ridge near here being Cabeza's mountain.¹ In this case

¹I submit Mr. Deussen's letter:

AUSTIN, May 7, 1906.

Mr. James Newton Baskett, Mexico, Mo.:

DEAR SIR: Referring to your favor of the 18th ult., I beg to say that any portion of the so-called Cambrian escarpment, near the corner of Mason and Kimble counties, might satisfy the condition you mention. A

the Llano would be the beautiful river—a stream which in Cabeza's time would well answer the condition.¹ I am inclined to this route, and believe that it was the edge of the second, or Cambrian escarpment, along which, almost directly northward, these travelers went. In any case they have overestimated the distance they went inland to these villages of the iron region. But it must be admitted that if the Colorado is regarded as one of Cabeza's big rivers, the distance from that to the Pecos, as the other, is about what the narrative requires. However, while the thirty leagues of plains may be found, it is impossible to find "a desert of very rugged mountains" destitute of all game, just beyond these and east of the Pecos immediately, or east of any other river, except the Rio Grande; but about the location of this latter river there is no doubt.

While I am inclined to believe that Cabeza has erred here, at least in the relative position of his second river and his range, or has considered some usually dry bed, filled with a mountain cloudburst, as a big river, on the west side of the trans-Pecos mountains, I venture the possibility of his having come around southwestward from some point west of the Llano River region, say down Dry Devils' River, and then having crossed the Rio Grande as his big river from the north. Thence he may have gone on across Coahuila and have found there, in proper sequence, the plains and the leagues, and ranges, after which he would cross the Rio Grande again at or near the site of the present Presidio San Vincent, whence he might well go on to the same river again at the mouth of the Conchas, and find the permanent houses.² I am not sufficiently acquainted with the topography of this route to discuss it.

tongue of this escarpment ten to fifteen miles in length constitutes the divide between James River and Rock Creek. The basal member of the rocks constituting it is ferruginous. It is called Blue Mountain. I think this must be the mountain you desire.

Trusting that you are making satisfactory progress with your study,
Very truly yours,

ALEXANDER DEUSSEN.

¹See article by Louis Reinhardt on "The Communistic Colony of Bet-tina" in *THE QUARTERLY*, III 33-40.

²It could be possible, as all the Indians with him along here had come from afar, that he might not realize that this was the same river at the three different points, since it is so distorted in location and direction. The tribes which did know about the region northward were met only thirty leagues out from the final intersection. To make these three intersections, the direction of the line of march need not have been changed except near the mouth of Devil's River.

I find later in one of Cabeza's summaries a hint that he came to these permanent houses on the Rio Grande from the south. He says:¹ "Where the permanent houses are it is so hot that even in January the air is very warm. From there to the southward the land, which is uninhabited as far as the Sea of the North [the Gulf] is very barren and poor. There we suffered great and almost incredible starvation; and those who roam through that country and dwell in it are very cruel people, of evil inclinations and habits."

It can be shown that Cabeza struck the Rio Grande near the mouth of the Conchas, from which it may be seen that a line to the southward would lead through Coahuila.

¹P. 166.